

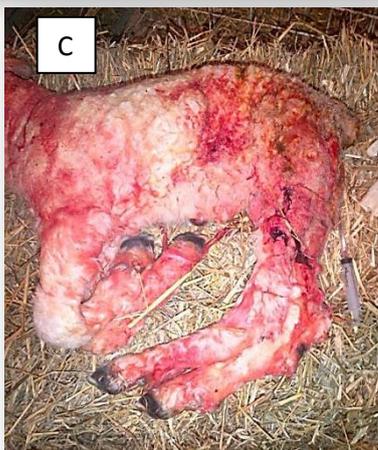


Schmallenberg Virus

Schmallenberg virus (SBV) is a new viral disease affecting cattle, sheep and goats. It was first detected within Germany in August 2011. It then spread to the Netherlands, Belgium and now the UK. In the UK it has been detected on 121 farms (8 positive cases in cattle, 113 in sheep). It has currently been seen in 18 counties. (5th March 2012). The disease has been associated with symptoms including milk drop, fever, loss of appetite, diarrhoea, late abortions and birth defects.

For up-to-date information, please go to <http://www.defra.gov.uk/ahvla> and scroll down to 'latest news', or type 'Schmallenberg virus defra ahvla' into google.

The virus appears to belong to a group of viruses spread by insect vectors, principally midges and mosquitos. The exact cause of transmission within the UK is not known, although the counties it has been seen in suggest that infected midges were blown to the UK from Europe. They infected the pregnant cattle, sheep and goats last October and this infection caused foetal congenital malformations in the uterus/womb, which is why we are seeing symptoms now at lambing time or around calving in new-born animals.



- A. Lamb born alive and quickly dispatched with relatively mild signs – flexed front left and deformities to back feet (B). Its twin was unaffected
- C. Lamb born by caesarean – note the over-long back legs.
- D. Lamb born with all four legs flexed and twisted.

Images A, B & C courtesy of Steven Trickie, Chaplefield Veterinary Partnership
Image D courtesy of Toby Kemble, Wensum Valley Veterinary Surgeons

What Can We Do?

Unfortunately, there is currently no treatment or vaccine for animals infected with the Schmallenberg virus. Immunity can possibly be acquired naturally, and vaccination is a possible option as a vaccine exists for the similar virus, Akabane. The disease is not notifiable and there are currently no implications to trade or movement barriers.

The following points are important, however, in order to help the situation.

- Be extra vigilant and support the gathering of information by reporting new-born limb and brain defects to your veterinary practice. It is important that cases are reported so that the true number of cases can be monitored.
- Farmers should consider post mortem testing. Currently Defra are covering the costs of testing for Schmallenberg virus. Once a case has been confirmed there is no need to send further samples from that farm.
- Any imports of live animals from EU regions affected by Schmallenberg virus should be undertaken in strict consultation with your vet.
- Although the virus can be transmitted during periods of insect activity, clinical signs may not be evident until later in the season. Always assess the risks of bringing stock onto your farm with your vet.
- Be extra vigilant. Remember to practice the highest possible levels of biosecurity and quarantine/separation whenever bringing new animals on site. Discuss biosecurity measures with your vet.
- To improve the ability of animals to counter attack the disease, farmers should promote general stock health and vitality by:
 - Providing good nutrition
 - Optimising mineral and trace element levels
 - Controlling internal and external parasites.

Schmallenberg Virus Meeting

You are invited to an evening meeting
presented by Chris Trower, BVetMed.DSHP.MRCVS.,
to discuss the implications of this important emerging disease and how it could affect you.

Monday 12th March 2012

7pm – 9pm

**At Larkmead Veterinary Group,
Ilges Lane, Cholsey,
Oxon, OX10 9PA**

Light refreshments & drinks provided

Please let us know if you would like to attend

TEL: 01491 651479 or Fax: 01491 652072

Or email: martha@larkmead.co.uk